

MINUTES OF SWRFT TRUSTEES' MEETING

SWRFT Office, Harbour Centre, Gairloch		PRESENT: Ian Lindsay (IL) – Chair Melanie Smith (MS) Ewan Macpherson (EM)		Alasdair Macdonald (AM) Ally Macaskill (AMac) Duncan Burd (DBd)
DATE:	13 th December 2017	APOLOGIES: Richard Greene (RG) Mark Williams (MW) Nigel Pearson (NP) Derek Dowsett (DD) Isabel Moore (IM)		James Close (JC) David Barclay (DB) Neil Cameron (NC) Bob Kindness (BK)
OPENED AT:	10.30	CLOSED AT:	13.10	
IN ATTENDANCE: Peter Cunningham (PC) Veronica Mullaney (VM) Bill Whyte (BW)		Peter Jarosz (PJ) Mary Gibson (MG)		

1. Matters Arising from the Minutes of Meeting on 5th October 2017

There was one amendment that should be recorded in the 5th October minutes under item 3 that DB prepared the presentation.
There were no other specific matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting.

2. Approval of the Minutes

The minutes were then approved by IL, seconded by AMac and confirmed as a true record of the meeting.

3. Meetings and Correspondence (PJ)

Main points refer to conversations with aquaculture in relation to site and condition monitoring.

IL set scene:

- ScotGov has given considerable leeway to aquaculture for development. The direction of travel seems to be that aquaculture will be required to underwrite/participate in the assessment of impact on the environment. Marine Harvest (MS) is taking the lead in this and have intimated that they are being held back by some of the poorer performing companies in the industry. MS has been discussing with the wild fish sector in order to put together a strategy to describe environmental monitoring at its sites. Planners appear keen to see this as a condition of planning – adaptive management in respect over monitoring would be built in planning condition. Loose heading for this is Environmental Management Plans (EMPs). It would provide the opportunity for SWRFT to be involved in monitoring – so existing monitoring would be undertaken at a higher level of quality and more intensively.
- MS is seeking to get an umbrella strategy document that would then be implemented on a site by site basis – site specific environmental management plans (EMPs) would be prepared.
- *Discussion:* PC asked question about independence of SWRFT – as the majority of work to undertake monitoring is coming from aquaculture. IL explained that MoU guarantees discretion of the academic and intellectual integrity. PJ explained that the initial document was drawn up between Alan Wells (Fisheries Management Scotland – FMS) and Ewen Gillespie (MS) so no money would be going direct to SWRFT from aquaculture. Money would go via FMS to Boards.
- BW explained that an EMP is a series of tasks that need to be carried out - enforceable by a planning condition - it is therefore a legal document. Requirement for an EMP is often not present – it depends on the nature of the application.
- PC made point that functions of the Trust are within its charitable remit.
- MG asked how the data obtained from the monitoring will be analysed and presented. IL said that currently we have not got to that sufficient level of detail. BW explained that information to the planning authority (Highland Council) will be submitted – with the emphasis on baselines being set. So that if a fish farm exceeds those baselines then, in next production cycle, mitigation should be put in place. MG made the point that in the terrestrial environment enforcement for mitigation is often not carried through. IL said that the “prize” was to commit

aquaculture to a condition of adaptive management. Contract for monitoring might have to come from the Planning Authority.

- PJ made point that the MoU document is important because, in theory at least, it can be used to hold aquaculture to account. BW raised the example of Loch Duich where there was a non-legal agreement to keep sea lice levels under control - yet levels rose to 47.1 lice per fish which demonstrates that such agreements are not necessarily binding.

4. Financial Reports

- PJ had circulated the cash projections (November 2017) that indicates a slight surplus at the end of the year. The annual accounts (ending 30th June 2017) for both the former WRFT and the SFT have been submitted to OSCR and Companies House. Finances of the new SWRFT are from 1st July 2017 to 31st March 2018 to bring them in-line with the fiscal year. Ronnie asked if there are any outstanding debts from SFT - PJ confirmed final outstanding dowry from the SFT current account is waiting to come over.

5. BIOLOGISTS' REPORTS

5.i PC's Report

Peter C reported highlights of the 2017 season:

- River Carron – more salmon than grilse....reasonable figures.
- Loch Maree had 45 sea trout.
- Tournaig – only one male salmon went through the trap which will need repairing for next year. IL asked “with such a low count is it worth the expense?” PC explained that the trap had operated since 1999, is relatively low cost and that information gained from the trap is very useful - e.g. from virtually 0 fish in early 2000s to reasonable counts now – it is effectively a barometer.
- ACTION: Some discussion about a similar fish trap on Skye at Kilmarie. Based on this PC will look at AMac's site to do an initial appraisal of what is required to put in a fish trap.
- PC stated that the SWRFT Annual Review is currently drafted and asked if sometime in January the annual report could be published on the web? It requires input from IM to include Skye and Skye and Wester Ross Boards should both have sections in the report – ACTION: BW and DD need to be asked if they want to provide/review section from the Boards in the report.
- Prior to the Review going on the web, the draft will then be circulated to DB and PJ.

5.ii IM's Report (in absentia):

- Isabel reported on her PhD progress to the project steering committee at a meeting in Inverness on 11th December 2017. The committee comprises the two funders Grieg Seafood and Marine Harvest, also Colin Bean, Colin Adams, Peter J, Ian L and Melanie S.
- IM reported particularly on the acoustic tracking stating that initial look at the data is very interesting.
- Recovery of tags was excellent at 80% as well as the full recovery of the 60 receivers and 60 transmitters.
- Using the data along with a programme with Google maps shows movements of individual fish.
- There is much more analysis to be done on the data, particularly in relation to environmental factors, fish farms etc.
- The acoustic tracking took place during the first year of fish farm production (from smolting to 3 months old).
- The first paper, in relation to fish farms and infection of wild sea trout, was submitted in early December to the Journal of Fish Biology.
- The Telemetry research itself should probably provide another two papers - possibly next summer.

- It is the first time this type of tracking work has been done for sea trout in Scotland. The continuation of the work may be possible next summer – in particular to get an insight into movements of fish in the latter part of the summer (this is of interest to the industry).
- Although the original offer of tags from MSS has been withdrawn, it would be good to keep up the initiative and look at taking this forward with Glasgow Uni. The main area of discussion centres round obtaining receivers and transmitters.
- **ACTION:** IL, MS to take forward with Colin A to explore sources of funding to further the telemetry.
- Other points from the advisory group meeting were: Colin A was able to raise £10k to undertake stable isotope analyses on fish from sweep netting. This will give useful information on proportions of trout to sea trout etc.
- Other work IM has undertaken includes work on historical rod catch records from rivers on Skye – IM is looking at producing a paper on populations of sea trout.
- Post PhD funding – IM's PhD funding comes to an end Oct next year. Following advisory meeting Grieg Seafood want SWRFT to tell them what SWRFT can do with an equivalent amount of funding. This could go towards the funding of a second biologist for SWRFT. Exploration of various options/possibilities for further funding and support for a second biologist discussed by the Trustees.

6. PLANNING AHEAD

Two potential ideas that have come up for flagship projects:

- In Wester Ross area Loch Ewe and Loch Maree have been iconic systems. This is at the scoping stage with BW and RG who are meeting to look at this. They will work out fully what information that already have, this needs to be reviewed and update. PC is pulling data out and reviewing. Then will work out how to fill in the gaps etc.
- **Loch Maree project** - possible hydro source as finance for “pump priming”. Something in the order of a fishing/habitat project providing socio-economic and environmental benefits of Loch Maree. Need to look at what existing data is available. It is a catchment scale approach. Loch Maree has numerous designations and therefore provides a good basis for a significant bid for funding.
- **Skye** – scoped out various partners with JMT being the major one. Some progress being made. Selection of potential rivers has slightly changed with the focus now on SRGPD owned rivers – probably the Broadford and the Strathmore. Others options could be the Camasunary (though this is less accessible and under private ownership) and the Sligachan. IL emphasised this is a demonstration project, not a scientific project. Primarily to encourage a direct public benefit. Identifying what the scope of the project will be is the most important first step – it needs a competent description. IL made point that there would be significant work involved in preparing a large project bid and looking elsewhere for support in preparation would be needed.
- RDP funding potential source – has to be a tangible public benefit arising from the project. HLF another source etc.
- **ACTION:** IL requested that PC undertake some ground truthing for restoration, next summer.

6. Structure of the Trust

PJ made the point that there needs to be an AGM for the election of directors. This is a required procedure when the longest serving directors step down and are either re-elected by the members or step down in which case new directors can be elected. PJ will put criteria in writing to Trustees nearer the time. Need to encourage people to come to the AGM.

IL asked question about open public events/raising profile etc. Could there be a Trust/Board open day next year – possibly combine with the AGM as likely to get better attendance.

7. AOB

- The Trust vehicle comes up for lease return on 14th Jan 2018. There is option of buying a 2016 Peugeot equivalent of the Berlingo. PJ recommended that we purchase (hire purchase) the vehicle which comes with a 3 year warranty and 2 years of free servicing so that the only additional costs would be tyres and road tax. The cost of vehicle is £10k. We can keep an open mind on when to sell this vehicle on. PC raised issue around personal use of vehicle. The chairman is aware of this. If the vehicle is a pool vehicle then the employee needs to pay inland revenue rate per mile and keep a clear log of mileage.
- *Trustees agreed that route of purchasing vehicle to go forward.*
- DB said that we should maintain some form of dialogue with neighbours to find out what they are doing and sharing good practice. IL explained about shared committees and steering groups that are made up of representatives from the various west coast trusts and boards. PC confirmed that SFCC biologists meeting is still happening annually to ensure sharing of information between trust biologists.

8. Date of next meeting

We should move the proposed date from 6th March to 8th March 2018 - *agreed*. Venue to be confirmed.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

DATE	LOCATION	TIME	STATUS
08/03/2018	Venue TBA	11.00	Proposed
30/05/2018	WRFT Office	11.00	Proposed